

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 OMB-01 EB-11 COME-00 DOTE-00 RSR-01 /126 W  
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R 301700 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8075

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBWSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2538

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN FONMIN' S VISIT TO ISRAEL

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

REF: TEL AVIV 2458

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING MEDICI VISIT, ITALIANS FOUND ISRAELI POSITION UNCHANGED AND ISRAELIS CONFIDENT THAT THEIR POLICY WOULD PRODUCE EVENTUAL PEACE; HOWEVER, ITALIANS DETECTED CONSIDERABLE UNDER- THE- SURFACE DOUBT AND QUESTIONING RE ISRAELI POLICY. ISRAELIS DISCOURAGED OTHER THAN US ROLE IN MIDEAST BUT ITALIANS CONTINUE TO BELIEVE EUROPE HAS PART TO PLAY. TERRORISM ONLY BRIEFLY TOUCHED UPON. ITALIANS BELIEVE PRINCIPAL BENEFIT OF TRIP WAS OPPORTUNITY FOR MEDICI TO HEAR ISRALIS' S POSITION DIRECTLY FROM ISRAELIS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MARCH 30, RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FONMINISTRY OFFICIAL ( PRO-CONFIDENTIAL

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TECT) WHO ACCOMPANIED FONMIN MEDICI ON HIS MARCH 26-29 VISIT TO ISRAEL, GAVE US ACCOUNT OF ITALIAN IMPRESSIONS. OFFICIAL SAID THAT TO HIS KNOWLEDGE NOTHING NEW DEVELOPED DURING SUBSTANTIVE POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT PRIVY TO PRIVATE TALKS BETWEEN MEDICI AND EBAN OR MEDICI AND PRIMIN MEIR, AND NO REPORT OF THESE HAD YET BEEN CIRCULATED AT MINISTRY.

3. ACCORDING SOURCE, EBAN HAD PRESENTED WITH HIS USUAL ELOQUENCE AND PERSUASIVENESS ISRAELI POSITION ON MIDEAST CRISIS, EMPHASIZING THAT: ISRAEL READY FOR NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT PRE- CONDITIONS; SETTLEMENT WITH EGYPT MUST COME FIRST; ISRAEL SATISFIED THAT PRESENT STALEMATE ACCEPTABLE, AND THAT TIME AND PATIENCE WOULD BRING SETTLEMENT. OFFICIAL SAID THAT MEDICI TOOK SHARP ISSUE WITH EBAN'S ASSERTION THAT PRESENT SITUATION ACCEPTABLE AND THAT ARABS WOULD COME TO NEGOTIATING TABLE IN TIME. MEDICI CHARACTERIZED SITUATION AS EXTREMELY RISKY AND CHALLENGED ISRAEL'S APPARENT COMPLACENCY ABOUT SECURITY OF STALEMATE. MEDICI AGREED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE NECESSARY, BUT MAINTAINED THAT TIME WAS NOT REPEAT NOT ON SIDE OF PEACE, AND ISRAEL AS WELL AS ARABS WOULD HAVE TO LOOSEN THEIR POSITIONS IN ORDER TO MAKE NEGOTIATIONS POSSIBLE. ACCORDING SOURCE, ITALIANS OFFERED NO NEW IDEAS AND ISRAELIS WERE AGREEABLE TO ITALIANS' EXPLAINING ISRAEL'S POSITION TO EGYPTIANS AND OTHER ARABS. OFFICIAL SAID PRINCIPAL BENEFIT OF VISIT FOR MEDICI WAS TO HEAR ISRAEL'S POSITION FROM ISRAELIS THEMSELVES.

4. RE EUROPEAN ROLE IN MIDEAST SETTLEMENT, SOURCE SAID ISRAELIS NOT TOO SUBTLY TOLD MEDICI THAT US WAS ONLY OUTSIDE POWER QUALIFIED TO PLAY ROLE. OFFICIAL SAID ISRAELIS EVIDENCED GREAT APPREHENSION THAT EC WOULD ATTEMPT TO MEDDLE IN MIDEAST, AND ALTHOUGH MEDICI IS NOT COMPLETELY TURNED OFF ON LEGITIMACY OF EUROPEAN ROLE IN SETTLEMENT, ITALY ITSELF UNLIKELY TO DO ANYTHING OUTSIDE OF EC CONTEXT. ON CANAL, MEDICI MADE FAMILIAR ITALIAN PITCH THAT REOPENING WATERWAY MOST IMPORTANT FOR EUROPEANS AND ESPECIALLY ITALIAN INTERESTS, AND ISRAELIS COUNTERED WITH THEIR WILLINGNESS TO OPEN CANAL AS PART OF INTERIM SETTLEMENT.

5. ACCORDING SOURCE, TERRORISM SUBJECT WAS ONLY BRIEFLY TOUCHED UPON. EBAN REGISTERED ISRAELI COMPLAINT THAT EUROPEANS, INCLUDING ITALIANS, SHIED AWAY FROM PUNISHING APPREHENDED TERRORISTS. ITALIANS RESPONDED THAT RELEASE OF EL AL BOMBERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITALIAN JUDICIAL PROCEDURE. OFFICIAL SAID EBAN THANKED ITALIANS FOR PREVENTIVE MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST TERRORISM, AND FOR THEIR COOPER-  
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ATION WITH ISRAELI AUTHORITIES ON SUBJECT.

6. CONCERNING GENERAL IMPRESSIONS, OFFICIAL SAID ITALIANS PERCEIVED NO RPT NO CHANGE IN ISRAELI POSITION ON MIDEAST SINCE THEIR LAST VISIT TO ISRAEL TWO YEARS AGO. HOWEVER, SOURCE SAID THAT EXTENDED CONVERSATIONS WITH ISRAELI OFFICIALS REVEALED THAT ISRAELI POSITION NOT RPT NOT MONOLITHIC, AND ISRAELIS NOT AS COMPLACENT ABOUT PRESENT SITUATION AS THEY WOULD LIKE OTHERS TO BELIEVE. ITALIANS PERCEIVED UNDER- THE- SURFACE DOUBT AND UNCERTAINTY ABOUT CURRENT ISRAELI POSTURE IN THEIR TALKS WITH ISRAELIS.

7. OFFICIAL SAID MOST NEGATIVE AND DISCOURAGING ASPECT OF ISRAELI THINKING WAS THEIR FIRM BELIEF THAT ARABS HAD NOT AS YET ACCEPTED EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL, MUCH LESS PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH IT, AND THEREFORE, CONCESSIONS THAT TOUCHED ON ISRAELI SECURITY WERE PERILOUS. ACCORDING SOURCE, ISRAELIS DENIED THAT OCTOBER ELECTION WOULD INHIBIT CHANGES IN ISRAELI POLICY BETWEEN NOW AND THEN. OFFICIAL SAID ISRAELIS ENVISAGED NEGOTIATIONS, IF THEY EVER GET STARTED, AS LASTING FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND THIS TIME CUSHION WOULD REMOVE DOMESTIC POLITICKING AS FACTOR IN ISRAELI POSITION. VOLPE

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED USINT CAIRO.

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**TAGS:** PFOR, IS, IT  
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